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FM AMEMBASSY SKOPJE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7725

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 0423

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

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RUESEN/SKOPJE BETA PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SKOPJE 000616

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/07/2018

TAGS: PREL UNGA UN KV MK MT

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA TO RECOGNIZE KOSOVO OCTOBER 9

REF: A. STATE 105796

1B. STATE 195796

1C. STATE 91908

1D. SKOPJE 614

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PHILIP REEKER FOR REASONS 1.5 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki informed Ambassador Reeker that Macedonia expects to formally recognize Kosovo in a joint announcement with Montenegro tomorrow (Oct 9). Milososki said there would be a session of Parliament beginning 1100 Oct 9, to discuss/recommend recognition; the parliamentary resolution would be submitted to the government by mid-afternoon; the government would then act on the resolution and announce recognition by early evening. PM Gruevski confirmed this in a subsequent telcon with the Ambassador.

12. (C) ICJ Resolution: On Oct. 8, FM Milososki and MFA Director Paskal Stojcevski informed us of Macedonia's plan to vote in favor of the ICJ resolution in UNGA in separate discussions with Ambassador Reeker and DCM Navratil, in spite of previous assurances that Macedonia would abstain (REFTEL-SKOPJE 614). The MFA justified this decision as a means to soften reactions from Belgrade, stating this was only a procedural matter and that Macedonia's vote would not be the deciding factor. The FM indicated they were under considerable pressure from Belgrade and feared repercussions.

The Ambassador warned FM Milososki and PM Gruevski of the potentially damaging consequences of this decision and strongly urged them to reconsider. They heeded his advice and returned to their previous position, assuring the Ambassador, again, that Macedonia would abstain from the vote.

13. (SBU) Demarcation: Macedonia and Kosovo demarcation commission representatives met with ICO in Skopje on Oct. 7 to document agreements and discuss outstanding issues, the most significant of which entails private property owned by Kosovo citizens that falls on the Macedonian side of the line. According to GOM demarcation head Todor Nanev, the total area affected is 65 hectares. The commission discussed various approaches to resolving this in a sustainable way, and the ICO together with the Kosovo demarcation commission plans to visit the area in coming days to discuss options (e.g., selling, swapping, etc.) with the landowners. Late that night, Prime Minister Gruevski contacted Ambassador Reeker to request U.S. assistance. He made a similar plea to the Ambassador Oct. 8 but indicated he will proceed as planned with Kosovo recognition on the 9th. While specifying how the GOM proposes to resolve the issue, Gruevski asked that the US (through Embassy Pristina) urge that a Kosovo government representative visit Kodra Fura, ideally Thursday while the GOM proceeds with recognition. According to Gruevski, with personal engagement "the Kosovo Government could resolve the issue within 2-3 hours. Nanev will meet

with the DCM Oct. 9 to discuss the issue further.  
Reeker